

## Our City

As you may recall the Friday before last found me in Malad for most of the day. I arrived back at City Hall in time to attend the senior project conducted by Garrett Sonnen and Mason Chacon. The young men were honoring past and present Fire Chiefs and Assistant Fire Chiefs. I must compliment Garrett and Mason on a job very well done. Their efforts made a difference and certainly recognized those who put service above self.

Beyond being able to thank those who volunteer, the part of the program I appreciated most were the words spoken by Otto Tiede. The story he told epitomized to me one of self-sacrifice and service. He spoke fondly of his years as the American Falls volunteer Fire Chief and of how he and two others had used their own savings to purchase the City's first fire engine because the City had lacked the funds at the time. It was a story well told by a man whose life embodied the values and character we should all strive to emulate. To say that I knew Otto Tiede may be a stretch as the only real conversations we had were during two FFA officer retreats at the Tiede cabin with him and Helen in Island Park many years ago. What I can tell you is that I have had the pleasure of working with each of his children in various capacities and each of his grandchildren had been through four years of the Ag program at American Falls and were all successful FFA members. I know him well through those he has left behind.

Otto Tiede passed away the next day and was laid to rest on Tuesday, May 5. His lovely wife Helen followed a few short days later. My heart goes out to the Tiede family for their considerable loss. But, I must say that in my lifetime I have met very few who reflect the values of family, faith, and community like Otto and Helen Tiede. Perhaps that is the Greatest Generation's true gift to those of us who follow. The gift of self-sacrifice, service, love of family and the true belief that we each must serve something greater than ourselves. None of us can take more than our souls when we leave this world. It is what we leave behind that truly matters; there are no better examples than Otto and Helen Tiede in that regard.

Those who attended the City Council meeting this past Wednesday were witness to another example of service, caring, and love as Ana Barboza and Hadley Hawkes presented the City of American Falls Police Department with hundreds of soft warm blankets and toys. The intent of the project was to provide these blankets and toys to small children when our officers and other emergency personnel respond to situations where children have been endangered, displaced from their family, or just need something soft to snuggle. According to the two young ladies and Chief Wilkinson, the project was an overwhelming success. I commend Ana and Hadley for choosing to do something that will truly make a difference in the lives of children who find themselves scared to death, disorientated, and lost in ways no person ever should be. Thank you ladies for choosing to put service and the wellbeing of others above self. Well done!

In speaking of service above self I would be remiss if I did not mention a few things from last Tuesday night's annual FFA Banquet. The American Falls FFA Chapter has been recognized as one of the State's premier chapters annually for over ten years. In those years the Chapter has consistently ranked in the top five out of 90 other chapters; including being recognized as the very best four times, twice this year and last. I tell you this because it is important that you know the reason. There are folks in this community who value service and sacrifice above self.

Folks who give annually of their time, resources and capital to the success of our Chapter and its members.

As I stood at the podium preparing to talk about each of my graduating seniors, my heart filled with emotion and words caught in my throat. It is something I can't seem to help or get past. In looking at the ten seniors, I saw success made possible through hard work and the unwavering support of our agricultural community, Chapter Alumni, parents and countless others. To all of you who choose to make a positive difference in the lives of our youth, you have my most sincere gratitude.

There is no greater gift to the future than to enable our youth to understand what can be achieved through hard work, self-sacrifice, and service. It is what Otto and Helen Tiede's generation gave to us. With the community's help it is what I try daily to instill in my students and FFA members. As I looked down the line of graduating FFA members the words caught in my throat and tears filled my eyes because I knew once again we as a community had been successful in effecting a positive difference in the lives of young adults. With that foundation laid, it is my unwavering wish that these young men and women will continue upon the path they have chosen and follow the example of those who made so many things possible for them.

Thank you Otto and Helen Tiede and all of you who choose freely every day to make great things possible. You each epitomize why American Falls is the best place to live.

Until next week...